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Further Evidence on the Shortage of
Food Grains in the USSR

A number of individual reports have come in recently which, though fragmentary tend to support the judgment that the USSR is indeed hard pressed for food supplies for the coming year. This evidence is in addition to previous information concerning the strict enforcement of the limitation of bread sales per customer, shortages of livestock fodder and distress slaughtering. In summary, the recent evidence indicates that the Soviets plan to:

- 1) Lower the quality of bread by raising the extraction rate when grain is milled into flour. Thus, more flour can be obtained from the same quantity of grain. There are already reports that white bread is unavailable in several cities and there is queuing for inferior brown bread;
- 2) Further reduce the quality of bread by use of additives;
- 3) Restrict the sale directly to consumers of flour by temporarily removing stocks from retail shelves;
- 4) Use various persuasive measures -- voluntary or involuntary -- to extract a bread substitute -- potatoes -- from individual producers.

Khrushchev realizes the possible grave loss of prestige -- domestic and foreign -- by reverting to Stalin tricks of "maximizing" the output of bread from a given supply of grain by reducing quality. The average Russian citizen is dependent on grain products to provide more than one-half of his daily calories and will obviously be sensitive to official attempts to degrade the quality of this important element in his diet. The regime has assurances of around 8 million tons of grain from other Western suppliers and it is impossible very precisely to measure the marginal importance to the Soviet leadership of an additional 2.5 million tons from the United States, but we believe the additional grain is needed.

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